

# **CEDAR LAKE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT**

## **– PUBLIC INTEREST SURVEY –**

### **RESULTS AS 26-JUL-2005**

#### Contains:

- A. Blank Survey
- B. Response Breakdown
- C. Additional Comments Received

#### Statistics:

- 204 total respondents (57 paper / 147 web)
- Survey distribution:
  - CLEA newsletter
  - Cedar Lake Chamber of Commerce Website
  - April 28, 2005 Cedar Lake Town Hall meeting

## CEDAR LAKE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT – PUBLIC INTEREST SURVEY



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), in partnership with the Cedar Lake Enhancement Association (CLEA), is currently in the process of performing a feasibility study for an environmental restoration project within the Cedar Lake watershed under the Corps' Section 206 ecosystem restoration authority. This authority is designed to support projects in aquatic ecosystems such as rivers,



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lakes, and wetlands, which will restore or protect aquatic habitat for plants, fish, and other wildlife species. The Corps and CLEA are currently in initial stages of the feasibility study to examine potential restoration alternatives for the Section 206 project. The overall project goals are as follows:

- Remedy problems in the watershed contributing to degradation of Cedar Lake ecosystem.
- Restore fish and wildlife habitat and create a healthier lake ecosystem.
- Increase biodiversity in Cedar Lake ecosystem while reducing abundance of non-native species.
- Improve water quality in Cedar Lake and reduce turbidity in the water column.

In addition to technical analyses, the Corps will be conducting fish surveys, sediment sampling, and bathymetric surveys this summer to aid in selection of potential project alternatives. Plans considered for implementation may include, but are not limited to the following:

- removing sediments from Cedar Lake
- restoring fringe wetlands and / or aquatic plant beds in Cedar Lake
- restoring wetlands, prairies and woodlands within the watershed
- eliminating nutrient input into Cedar Lake
- restoring native fish communities to Cedar Lake

This following questionnaire serves as the means to incorporate public ideas and suggestions into the restoration plan, and to get feedback on public perception of current lake quality and future actions to restore Cedar Lake to a cleaner, environmentally sustainable, and more aesthetically pleasing resource. Please return this form to Bob Gross (219) 374-5771 at the Cedar Lake Enhancement Association, P.O. Box 823, Cedar Lake, IN, 46305, or in person at the Pine Crest Marina, 14415 Lauerman St., Cedar Lake, IN 46303. Thank you for your input.

1. Is the respondent considered as one of the following? (select one)

- ☐ lakefront resident
  - ☐ Cedar Lake resident, but not on the lakefront
  - ☐ non-resident, but lake user
  - ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Note: Please indicate # of years of residency - \_\_\_\_\_

2. What type of uses or activities does Cedar Lake provide you? (can select more than one)

- ☐ an aesthetic sense of living on a lake
- ☐ active use (water skiing, tubing, speed boating, jet skiing, etc.)
- ☐ passive use (pontooning, fishing, paddling, etc.)
- ☐ swimming, beach lounging, picnicking, etc.
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you view the current state of Cedar Lake? (select one)

- ☐ clean and unimpaired
- ☐ satisfactory, but can use some improvement
- ☐ degraded and in need of major improvement
- ☐ degraded, but not worth the effort to restore
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

4. To what degree should watershed residents be required to reduce their use of lawn care chemicals and fertilizers in order to increase the water quality of Cedar Lake? (select one)

- ☐ completely eliminate the use
- ☐ cut use by 50%
- ☐ cut use by 25%
- ☐ should be allowed to use as much as they like

5. To what degree should farmers be required to reduce their inputs of chemicals, fertilizers and nutrients into waterways that discharge into Cedar Lake in order to increase the water quality of Cedar Lake? (select one)

- ☐ completely eliminate inputs
- ☐ cut inputs by 50%
- ☐ cut inputs by 25%
- ☐ should be allowed to input as much as they like

6. To what degree would lakefront residents be willing to support native aquatic vegetation growth (such as water lilies, cattails, etc.) in the lake in front of or near their residence in order to increase the biodiversity, reduce erosion, and add to the aesthetics of Cedar Lake? (select one)

- ☐ fully support the growth of aquatic vegetation
- ☐ somewhat support the growth of aquatic vegetation
- ☐ completely against the growth of aquatic vegetation

7. Should active recreation (water skiing, tubing, speed boating, jet skiing, etc.) be reduced in terms of time spent on the water if an increase in water clarity would result? (select one)

- ☐ agree
- ☐ disagree

8. Should active recreation (water skiing, tubing, speed boating, jet skiing, etc.) be reduced in terms of space allocated for activities if an increase in water clarity would result? (select one)

- ☐ agree
- ☐ disagree

9. Is it acceptable to designate certain parts of the lake off limits to high-speed motor craft if an increase in water clarity and aquatic habitat would result? (select one)

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

10. If water clarity were improved in Cedar Lake, would you be willing to accept a natural increase in native aquatic plant growth throughout the lake? (select one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Would it be acceptable to dredge sediments from the bottom of Cedar Lake to improve water clarity and quality? (select one)

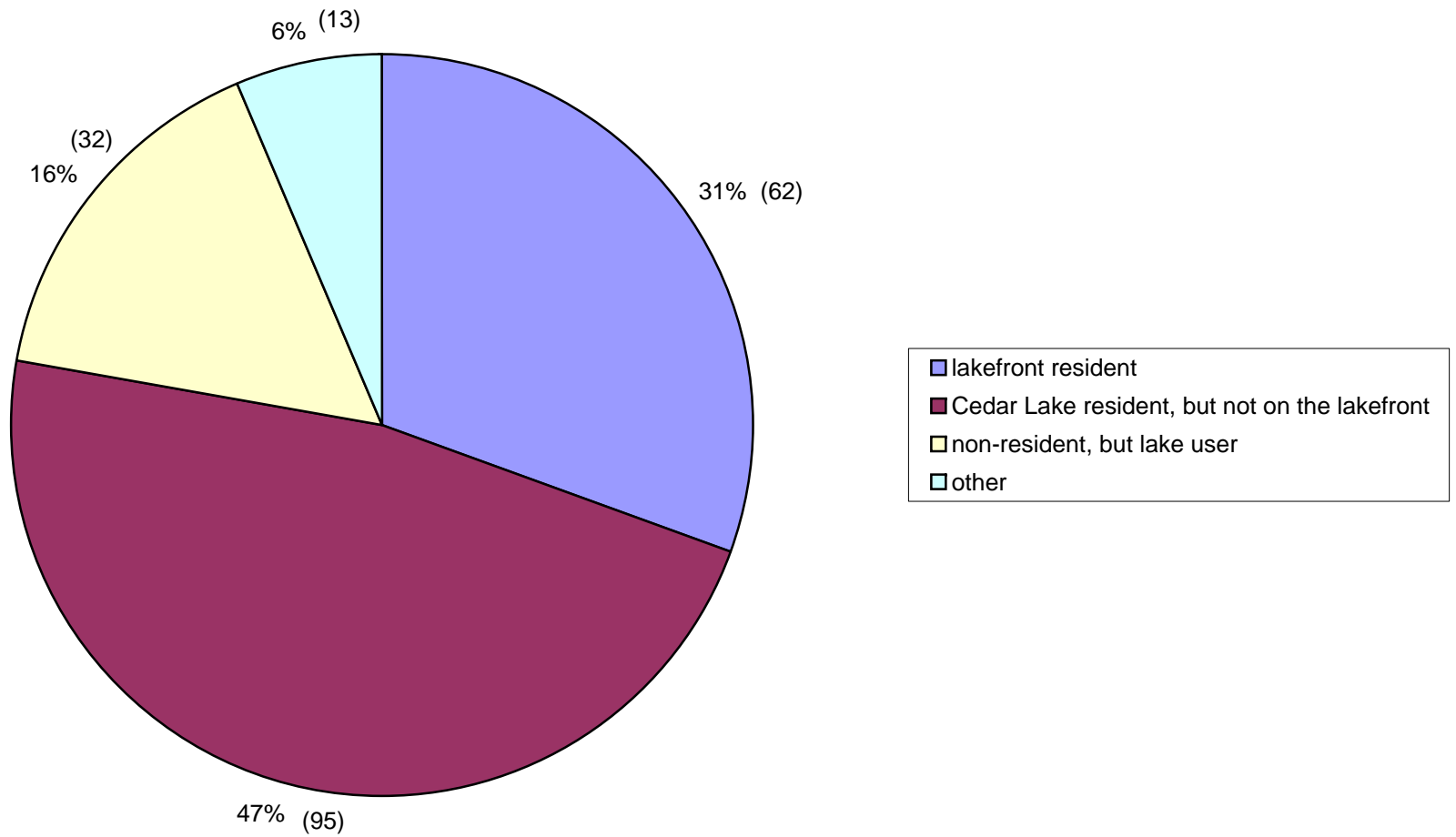
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

12. If dredging were acceptable, where could dredged sediments from the bottom of Cedar Lake be placed? (can select more than one)

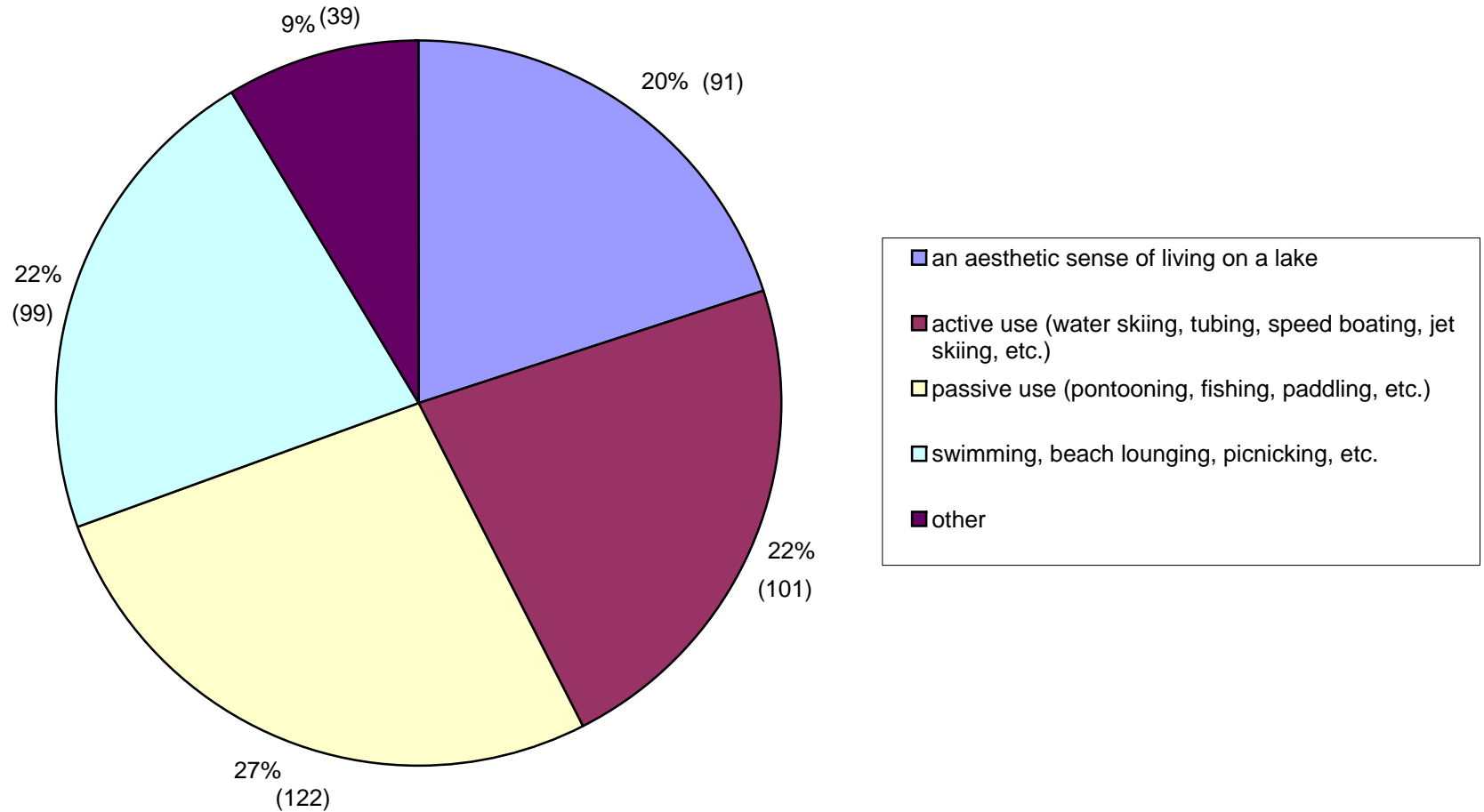
- ☐ within other parts of the lake
- ☐ on portions of vacant land
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide any additional comments on separate piece of paper.**

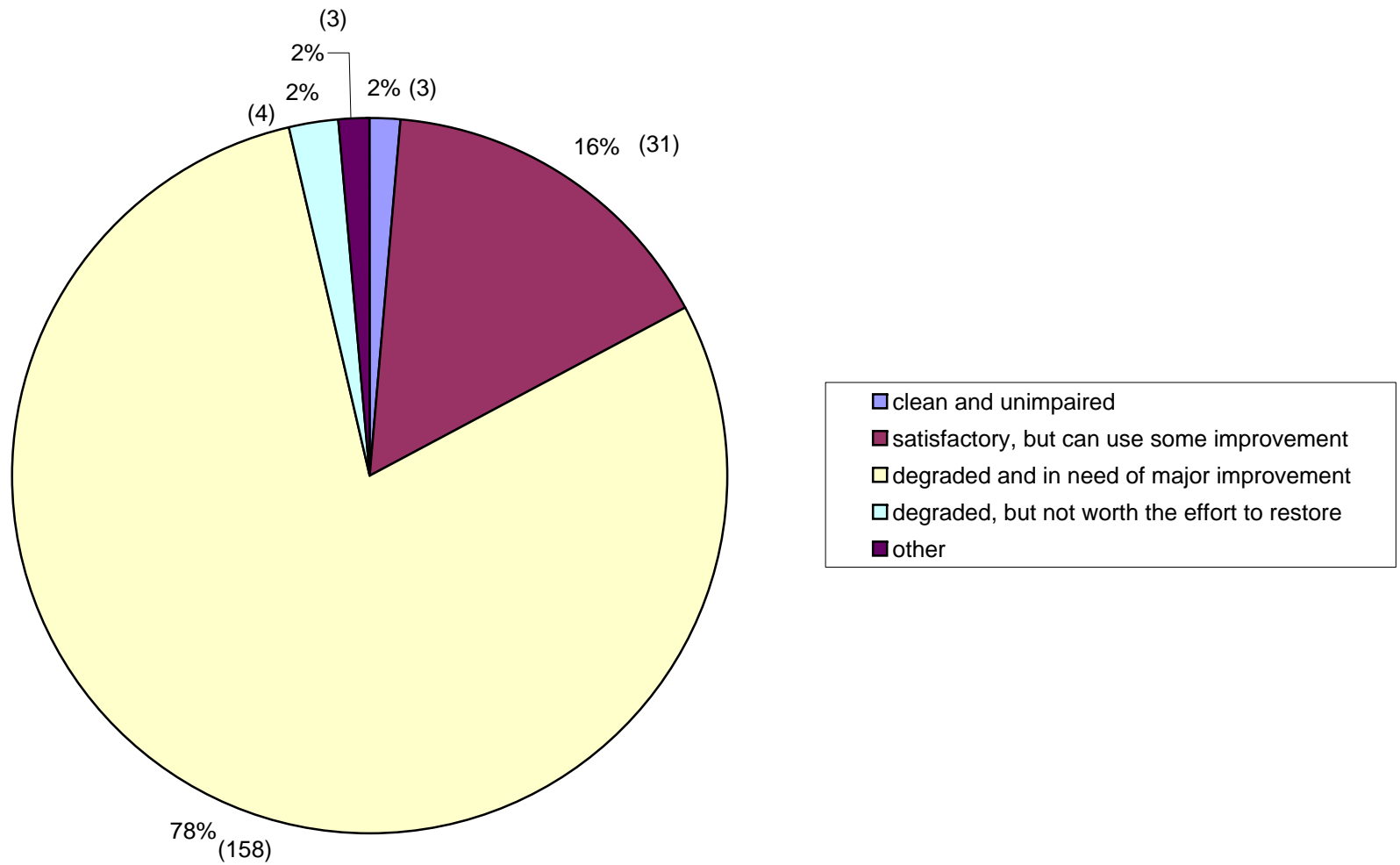
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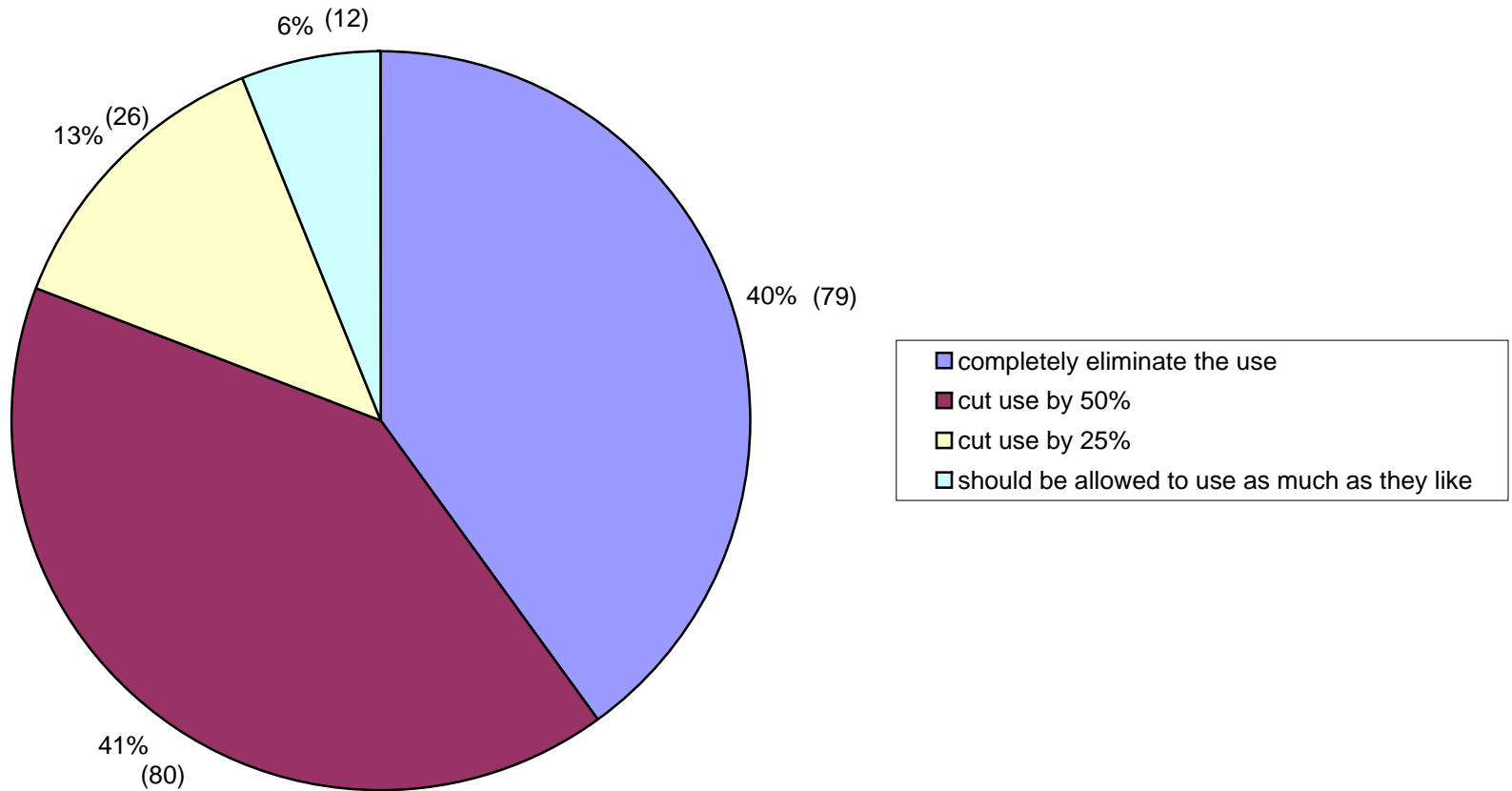
## 2. What type of uses or activities does Cedar Lake provide you?



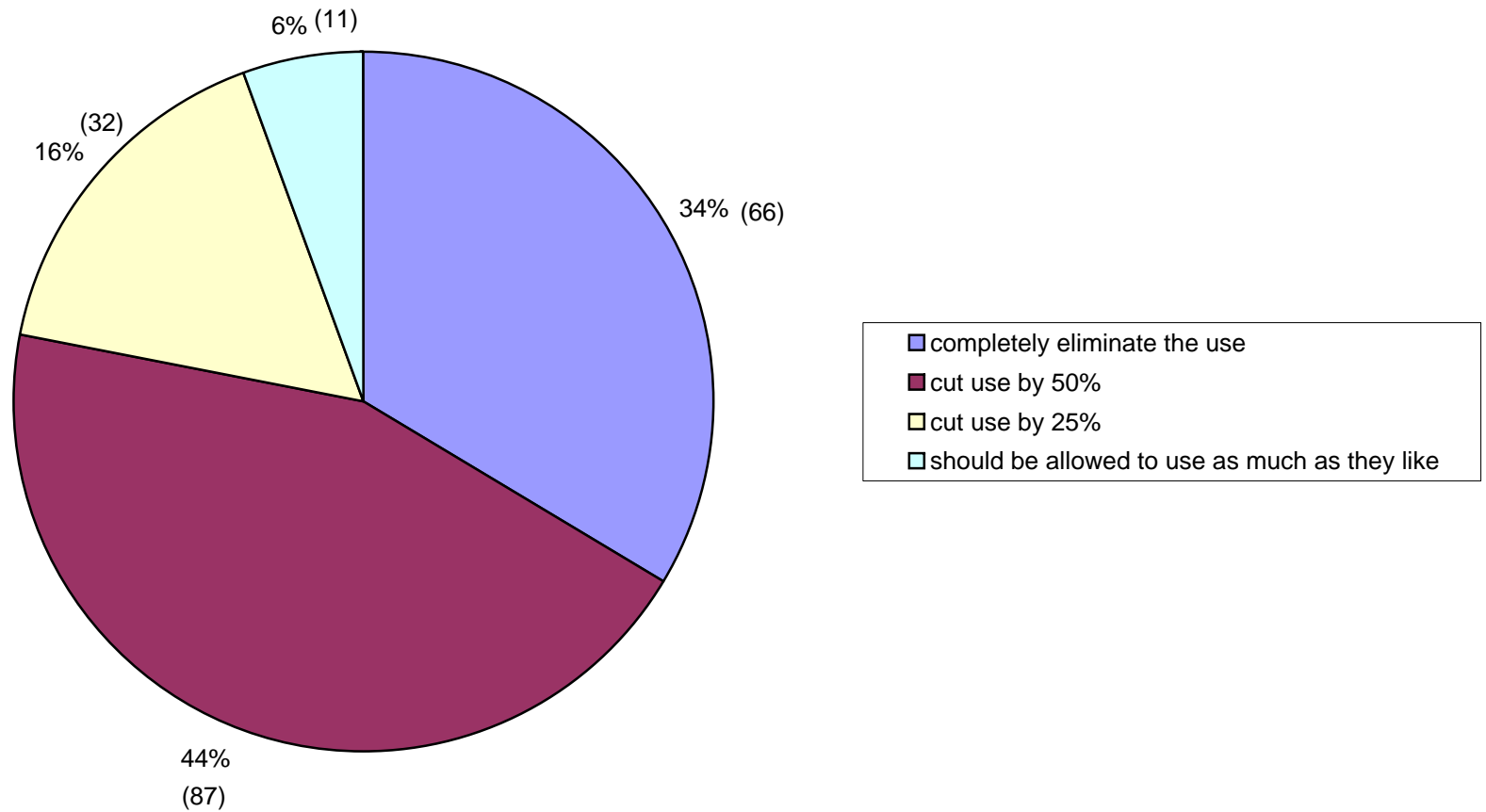
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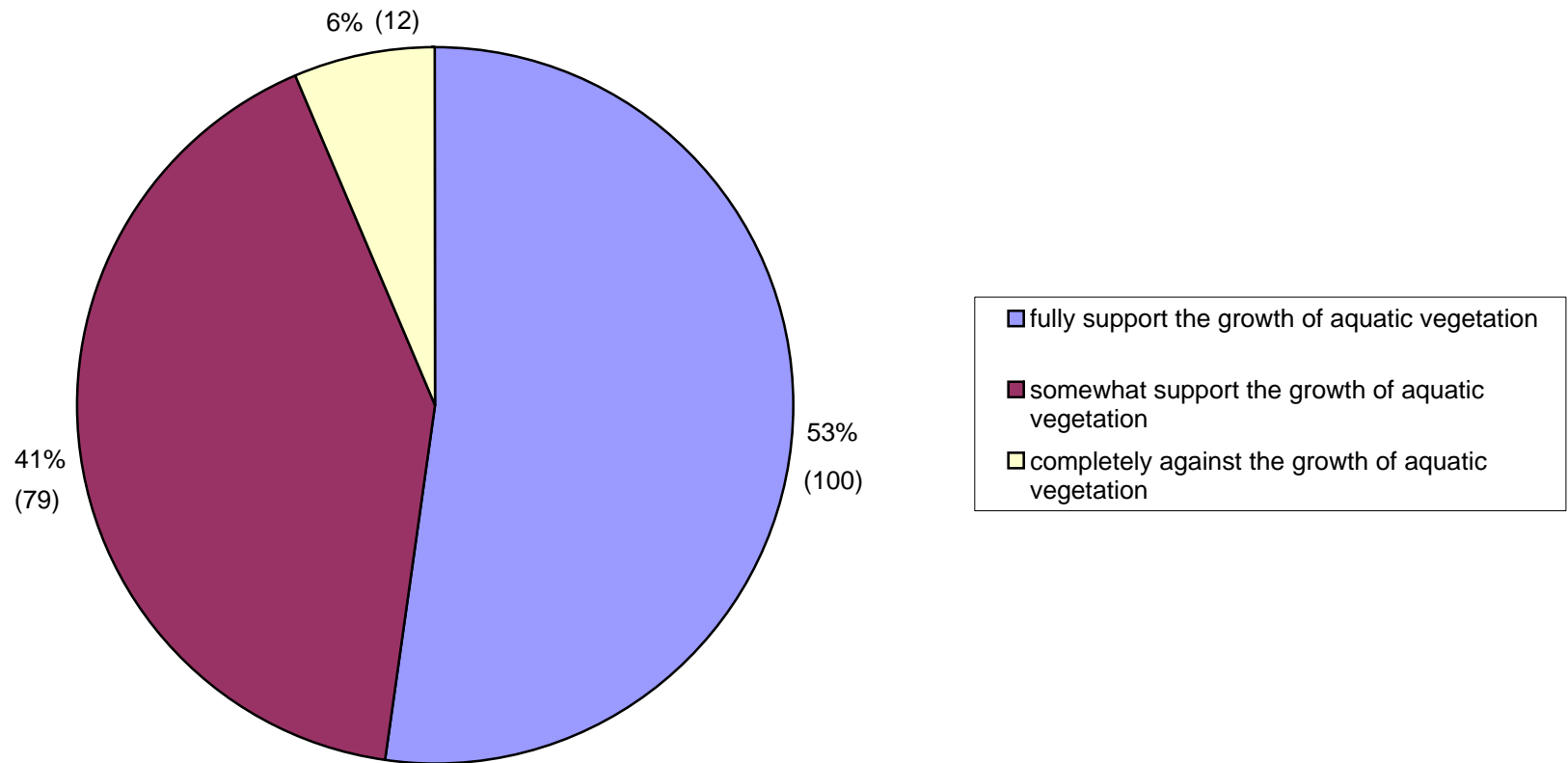


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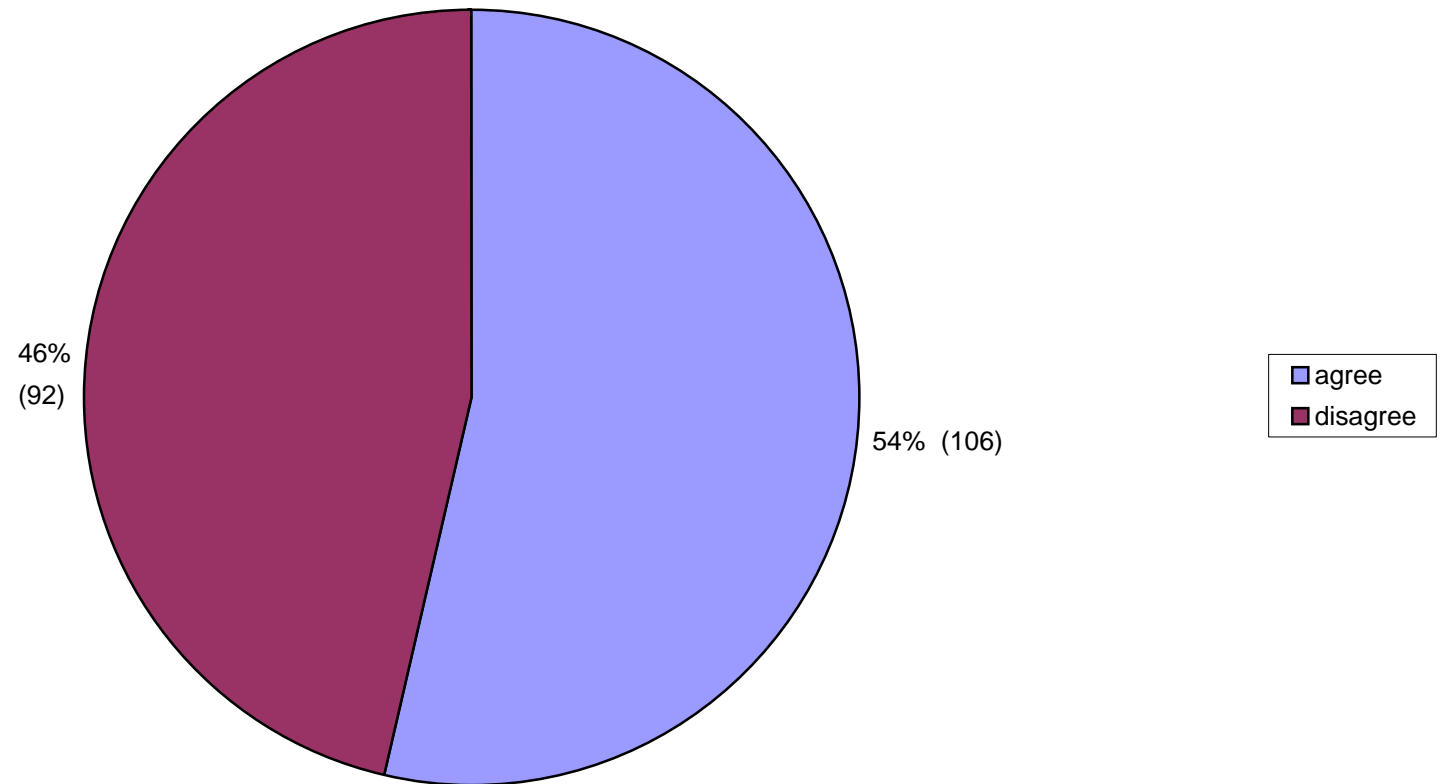




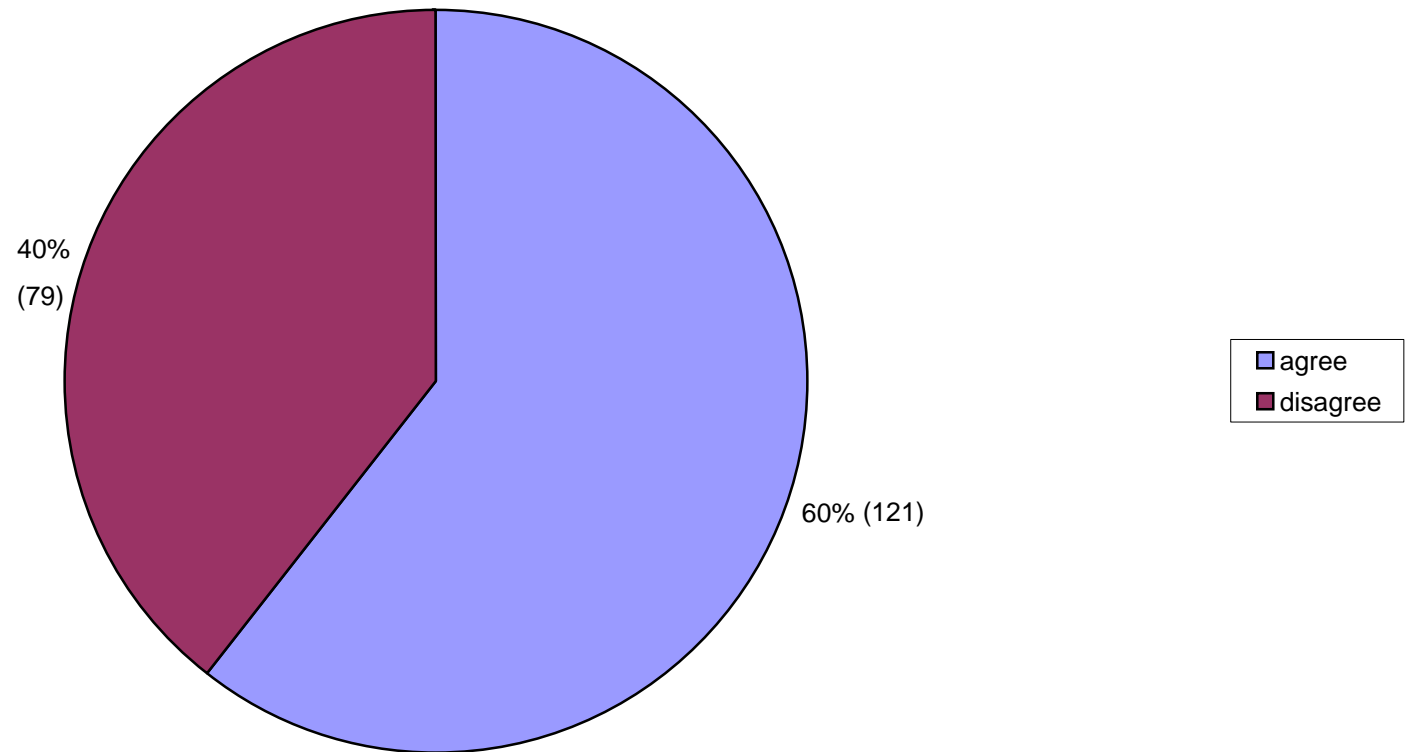
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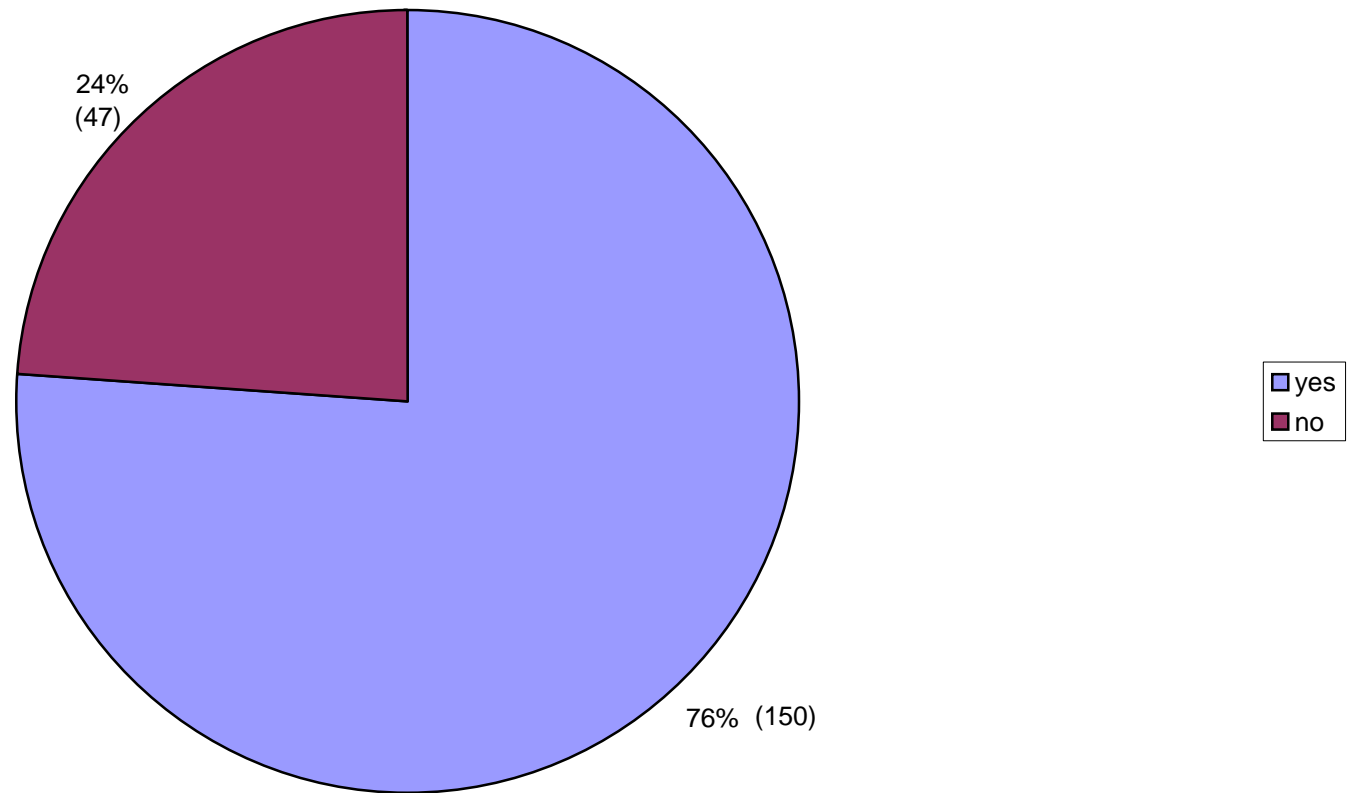
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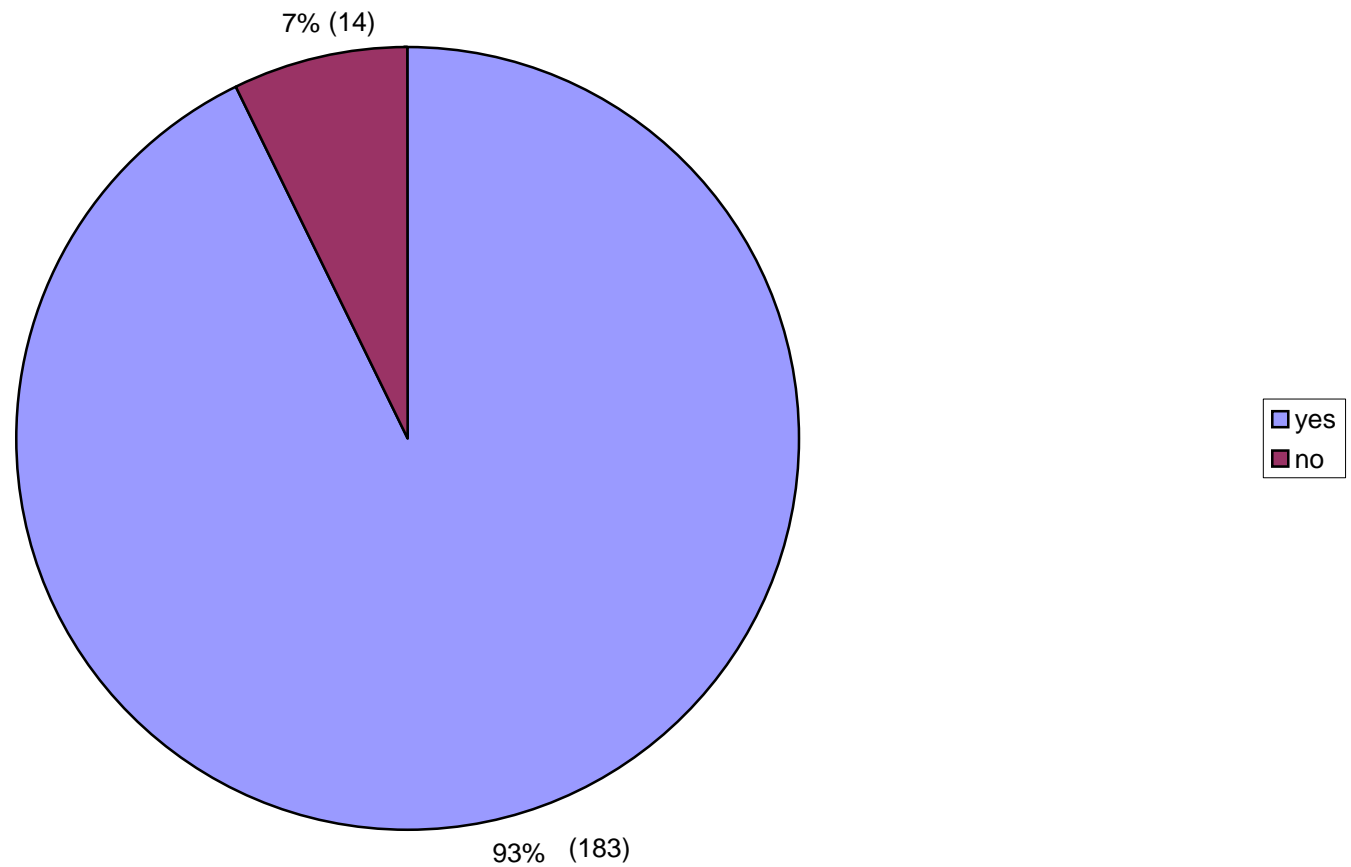
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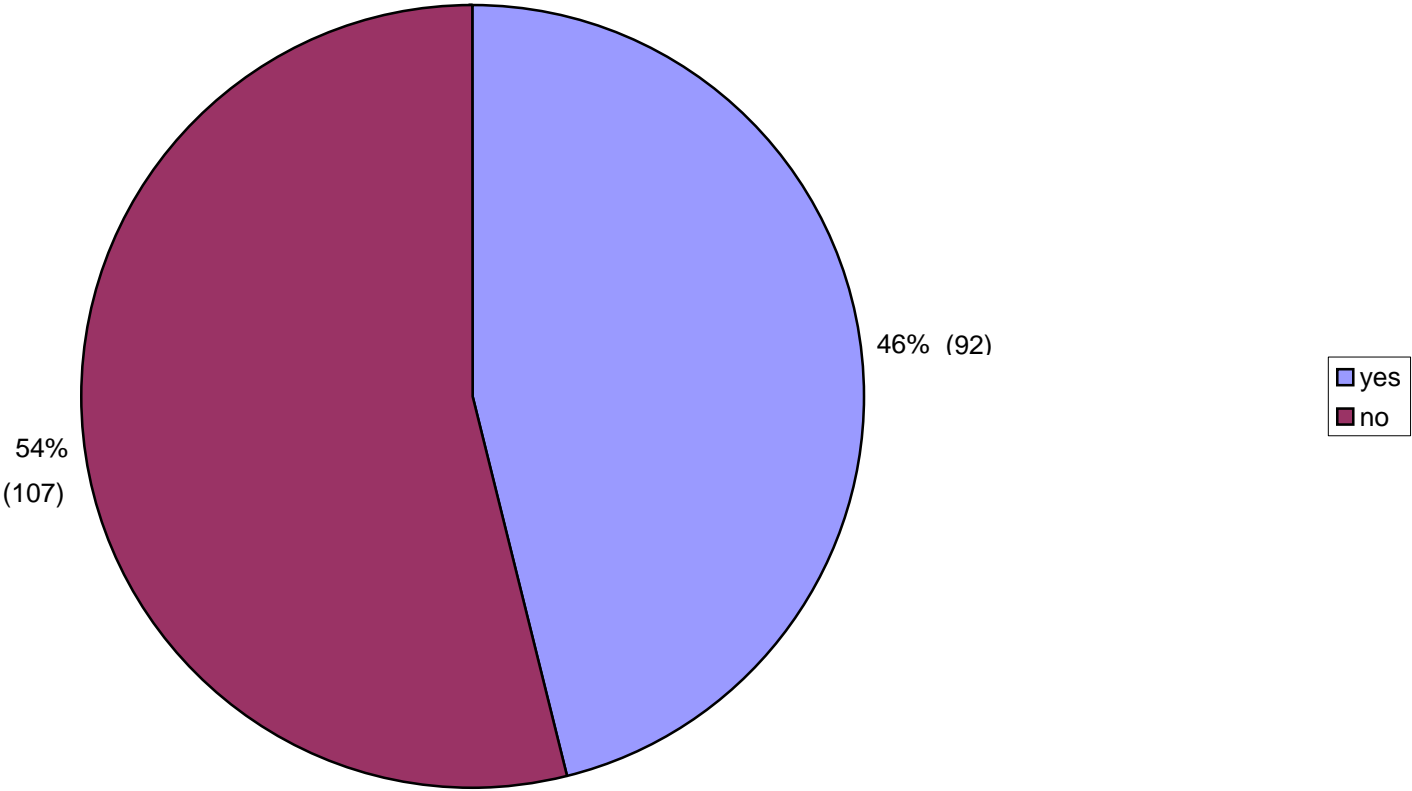
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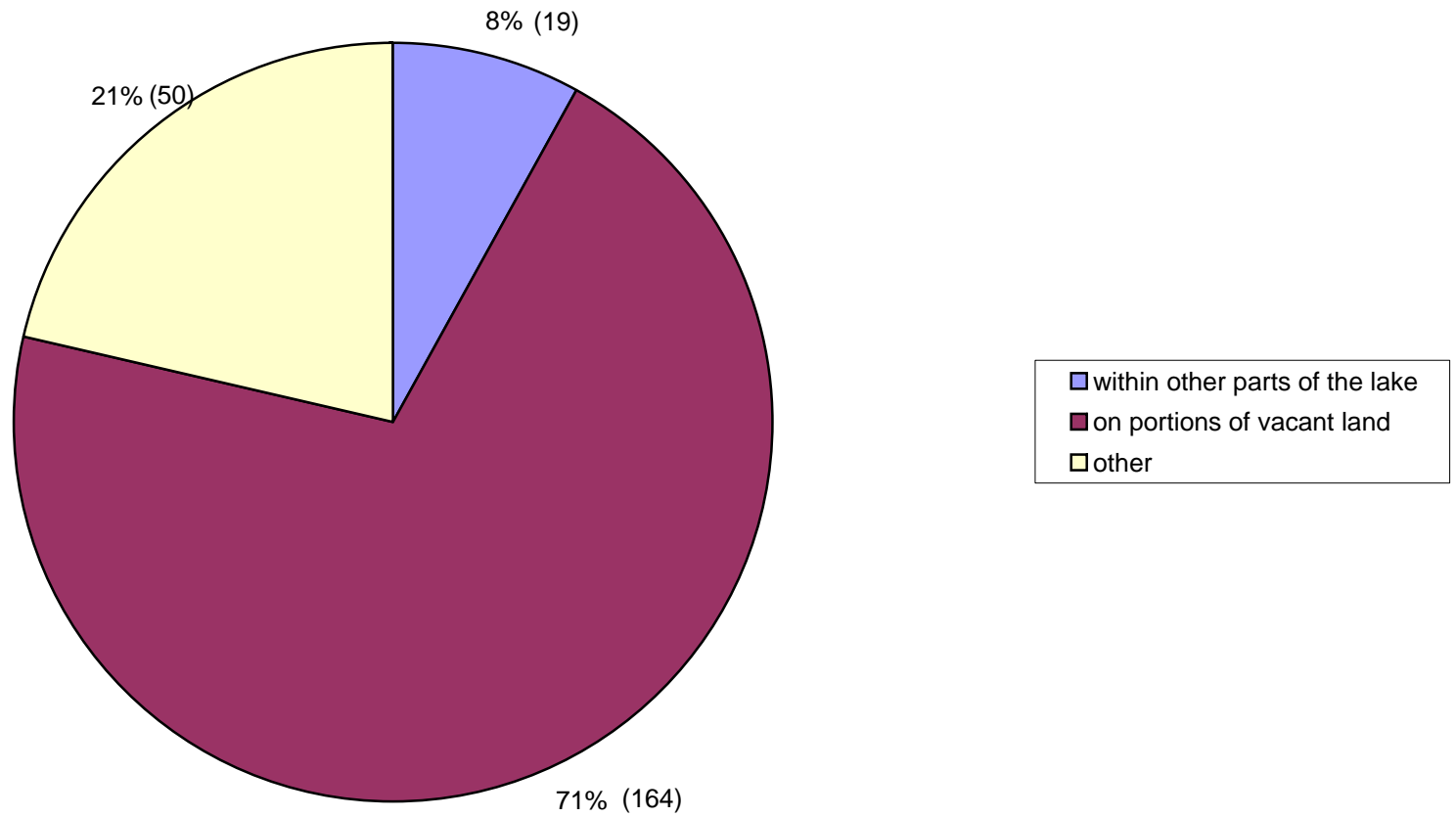
**10. If water clarity were improved in Cedar Lake, would you be willing to accept a natural increase in native aquatic plant growth throughout the lake?**



**11. Would it be acceptable to dredge sediments from the bottom of Cedar Lake to improve water clarity and quality?**



**12. If dredging were acceptable, where could dredged sediments from the bottom of Cedar Lake be placed?**



## Additional Comments

- I think Cedar Lake is coming along, but is still in need of improvement. It will only benefit the surrounding area to make the lake in a better/healthier condition.
- I think that Cedar Lake has the potential to be revered as a safe family friendly community, if we do as much as we can to "clean up" not only the lake, but the businesses around the area. The nicer we look as a town, the more new subdivisions will move in, in turn giving the town more money to work with. Just some simple rules about paint, acceptable signs, cleanliness of display windows, that would make a huge difference! Homes should have the same rules, look at the surrounding prosperous towns, they have rules about the way homes look, a bucket of soap and water and a little respect for your town and your own home isn't too much to ask in my opinion. With that, more money WILL come; we can be what we should be!!
- Why can't we somehow dispose of the dredge sediments in the county dump, or perhaps a place where it would not hurt the environment, perhaps a local land fill or county dumping area which is monitored and treated?
- Cedar Lake is too shallow along most of the shorelines and something needs to be done.
- The shoreline in Cedar Lake is 3 feet deep 50 to 100 feet out depending on what time of year it is. This needs to be addressed. Old timers that I have spoken with over the years, has told me that there are numerous natural springs, as many as 300 that need to be opened. The only way I was told this could happen is by dredging.
- I used to live on the lake, after the spring thaw the lake was rather clear, but the minute the boat traffic started that was the end of the clear water. I still think the lake needs motor size restriction. Drive by any marina or public access site in the summer and count the number of out of state plates using the lake. Increase the fee to use the lake and put it towards a clean up. I remember in 1984 when we had a severe drought and looking around the shoreline and noticing, chain link fencing, old car batteries, tires, garbage cans, bottles and beer and pop cans, this is just to name a few. You have a gold mine sitting there going to be a swamp if not taken care of now. It would be nice to have a fishery close by that you could trust to eat the fish rather than having to travel two hours in any given direction to fish. I am sorry to say, but the local people do not trust the water in this lake and it has a bad reputation for being a polluted cesspool. I recommend filling it in and making the third airport.
- My grandparents raised their six children in Cedar Lake, I am raising my three children here. I believe in this town and would LOVE to see it be as beautiful as possible. The lake is the "main attraction" of Cedar Lake and it should be restored to its glory!



- 40-50 years ago the lake had many native aquatic plants along the shoreline. Today most have been eliminated due to heavy boat use and wave actions. At the time fishing on the lake was excellent. Many large northerns, large and small mouth bass were in abundance. Every spring it was possible to catch large crappie and bluegill along the shoreline. Fishing in recent years has been poor with multiple rough fish having infested the lake.
- I believe the State of Indiana needs to take a more active part in controlling the lake. They seem to be more interested in lakes where the state has its own marina. I also think that boat traffic should be controlled to some degree. Pine Lake in Indiana has all heavy boat traffic moving in one direction on the lake. It makes for a safer boating lake and seems to protect the shore line better due to wave action.
- The sewage overflows need to end.
- Please fix the Lake, We are in need of this and we need a shot in the arm to get this town going in the right direction and to bring in businesses and new residence. We can try to restore Cedar Lake to its once Great Place to go status!
- I have been boating on Cedar Lake for about 10 years and the 2006 season is the worst that I have seen it in a long time. I don't exactly know what the fix is, but something must be done. As of this time I will be boating elsewhere until such a time that the lake is cleaned up.
- The Corps of Engineers is repeating earlier studies at the cost of local residents. This is not why we contacted the federal government.
- Shame on the Chicago District for their waste of local funds raised by volunteers at bake sales, pledge drives and dinners.
- We have been lakefront homeowners since 1967. This project is much needed and highly appreciated.
- My husband and I own some lake-access property, and we spend much of our free time on Cedar Lake. We enjoy boating, swimming, and many other types of water sports.
- We feel that Cedar Lake is definitely in need of some form of dredging, or some similar process. We wrecked our prop 3 times last year, and once this year. A few weeks ago, we located some old pilings near the golf course club house (while we were looking for a still unidentified water hazard that chewed up our prop), and called the DNR to mark them with a buoy. Incidentally, these pilings were WELL outside of the buoys and surprisingly far out in the water - we hate to think of what would have happened if a water skier fell on them. There are still quite a few hazards in the water, and it would be nice if they could be located and removed.

- I am very much in favor of what ever it takes to clean up the lake as soon as possible. If that occurs, I would love to live on the lake and contribute to whatever efforts were occurring. I would think the most drastic measures should be taken in the short term and that more conservative measures may be acceptable in the future for maintenance purposes. A clean, desirable and attractive lake area will never happen if someone doesn't "get the ball rolling". The sooner, the better.
- I am glad to see Cedar Lake getting cleaner and in better condition as the years go by.
- I think it is beneficial to the surrounding area/town to clean it up even more.
- You must be careful changing the entire purpose for which the lake has been used for the past 40 years (recreational, boating, skiing, hunting, swimming ..., the impact of changing everything for a single reason (environmental cleanup), that your not positive will be the result of the many inferred changes could and historically are terrible for everyone. There is nothing wrong with being very concerned about the environment, but don't confuse the issues. As if allowing certain events to happen and restricting others will guarantee the absolute results you want. More harm than good comes out of most governmental interference with situations like this. BE CAREFUL!!!!
- The answer as multi leveled as it is should begin with dredging. The sediment need removal before the lake dies. Thank you for this opportunity.
- We keep hearing that the lake will be dredged to eliminate the sediment that has plagued this lake for years. This can't happen fast enough for me. However, to my knowledge, there is no progress on this whatsoever although it is refreshing to see at least someone is addressing this issue such as yourself. More needs to be communicated to the residents so planning can be done to fund the seawalls that apparently will be necessary to help the lake.
- For almost 20 years people have "pledged to dredge" this has taken too long.
- It would be nice to see the lake improved in my lifetime.
- I believe that the lake needs help, and the cost of it has to come from somewhere. Do we not already have a portion of our sewer bill going to the enhancement dept? Are we not going to see an increase in our sewer bill due to the new treatment plant? Soon, with all the little add-ins, we will be paying more for "sewer" than neighboring communities . . . who also have "city" water.
- Keep up the good work. Your efforts have already shown a dramatic improvement in the water quality. Do not get discouraged by those that detract from your efforts. The lake is the greatest asset to the community and deserves the support and efforts of all.

- I intensely support an active approach to restoring and maintaining the lake. I am encouraged to hear that natural means such as wetland and native plant
- Our family used to come to Cedar Lake several times a summer for boating, swimming, etc. until we found our toddler grandson playing with human feces on the beach by Pinecrest Marina. That was 12 yrs. ago, & we had heard last year that the lake had been cleaned up. So, we took our family, once again, back to our favorite lake - close proximity to home, shaded picnic area, docking boat close by, beach for little ones. We docked our boat off the pier in front of the picnic area, & stayed about 6-7 hours. When we pulled the boat out we saw this deep orange stain on the under side of the boat that came up to water level. We couldn't scrub it off, & ended up taking it to be professionally cleaned - costing us over \$100. That ended up being a very expensive day of boating. Needless to say, we have not been back. There is, obviously, some chemical - rust from well water? - that did this to our boat. Surely, this has happened to other boaters, & you've had other complaints. Where did the "orange" come from?
- I have lived in Cedar Lake for most of my life and can remember being told stories about the active tourism the lake once welcomed. However, since I was a teen, I stopped activities on the lake. All I can remember is coming out of green-slimy water with ruined clothes. To this day, the Lake looks beautiful only on rare occasions. It has been deemed as an ugly, dirty lake that has lost it's appeal; this among other 'cedar lake' comments regarding those of us who still choose to call it our home. I would LOVE to see this town and it's people accept a WHATEVER IT TAKES attitude to make Cedar Lake a beautiful place to SEE and ENJOY! I look forward to the day when people will envy those who have decided to stay in our small town through the good and bad. Some day I hope to hear 'ooooh, you live in Cedar Lake?' instead of 'ewwwwww, you LIVE in Cedar Lake?'
- I have a very limited background with the lake; however, I recognize the importance of improving this natural resource for our community. As a non-lakefront resident, I would like to see improved recreational access to the lake in the form of a community park -- with modern (aka new) picnic groves, play areas, ample parking, restroom facilities, etc. I think there are enough opportunities for boat launch, fishing, etc. but as a resident who doesn't participate in those activities, I do not know of an accessible, family friendly location to enjoy the lake.
- Perhaps I would feel more positive if we could use the lake. No parks or public access so why bother.
- Cedar Lake needs an open park somewhere on the lake front, with playground equipment, something where our children can look at the lake while swinging, playing, etc.... more activities for children under the ages of 18 that express what the lake does for us as humans.

- Reintroduction is being discussed. I think it is important to educate residents in order to create support for any project.
- I feel that the Cedar Lake Enhancement Association has made major strides over the past 15 years. Before we moved here, I could always tell if my husband had our boat in Cedar Lake by how dirty it was when he got home. Now, it does not appear to be any dirtier than any other lake in the area.
- I am a former 20 yr resident of Cedar Lake. I was taught to swim at 4 yrs of age since we lived very near the lake in Meyer Manor. I visit often and have seen what appears to be great improvement in the Town in general. Although as soon as I saw other lakes and realized what I had been playing in all those years I avoid the lake for swimming. I think it's great that the community is looking into ways to improve the quality of the lake water.
- Even though I have lived in Cedar Lake for less than a year, and I don't actively use the lake, I would like to be able to take my children to the lake without being afraid of letting them in the water for fear of what's in it. The lake has had a bad reputation for a long time, and it would be nice to enjoy it.
- It would seem to me that a primary concern would be to stop the inflow of sewage from sewer overflows that happens during heavy rains. This not only produces hazardous contaminants to the lake, but nutrients that feed algae growth.
- Stop the sewer overflows near Pine Crest, Coffin's and 145th Ave.
- We are considering purchasing lakefront property, but hesitate due to the bad reputation of the lake. We also wish the water in the homes was not well water. We encourage you to dredge and improve the lake.
- I love this town. I have lived here for over 21 years. I remember Coleman's Corner, Lyle's or Lyod's? Pharmacy then John's Pharmacy, and good old Chicken City. I personally think it is getting way to crowded and believe these little roads were not made for such a large population. I find it crazy that I turn into town from US 41 and traffic is backed up from Custom Top Video all the way to Cedar Lake Kitchen. This town has never been so packed before. Let's Expand the roads before we work on the lake!!!!
- Our subdivision has an underground pipe that leads to the lake that runs next to my property. When I inquired regarding it's function, I was told that it collects rainwater from the ditches that are up our lane. I know that fertilizer and other unhealthy chemicals are flowing through this pipe and into the lake and welcome the Corp of Engineers to investigate. I live in Wilson subdivision at 141st and Lake Shore Drive. I commend what is trying to be done and hope that it is accomplished because this lake is too beautiful to be a toxic waste dump. Keep up the good work.

- As a longtime resident of Cedar Lake, I support dredging the lake. Cedar Lake would improve all around. If the lake was an attraction, the town would benefit from the tourist activity, and our small town would have a beautiful tourist attraction that we can be proud of!
- The lake is a beautiful natural resource. It should be kept as clear as possible while still allowing people to enjoy activities such as boating, etc. The area around the lake is in need of rehab. Both the lake and the areas surrounding it should be kept clean and nice so the lake can be enjoyed by everyone.
- If the marinas would charge a dollar extra for each vehicle entering and using the lake to be donated to the dredging fund, we could come up with the money a lot faster. When you drive by the marinas, most cars are from Illinois, and they are enjoying our (although it is a public lake) lake. I think that the people who enjoy using the lake so much should also have to help to clean it up.
- I think some of the housing near and around the lake also needs attention. Some of these buildings cannot possibly be meeting code, as well as being an eyesore. This is an area which the residents want to be proud of and able to enjoy its many uses with their family and friends, building strong community ties. Should we want to have it appear as substandard housing?
- The Lake looks better than it has in the last 10 years. We have been hearing about dredging for at least that long. The removal of the old piers and storage building and many homes that have been remodeled have contributed to the improvements. Chemical runoff should be reduced to whatever level the dredged and re-forested lake can keep in balance (environmental study) I think the dredging should be deeper than what I've seen proposed. The amount removed should look as far ahead as possible(keeping within financial goals)when making this decision. I don't know how popular this would be in light of all the complaining (including myself) that went on with the sewer increases years back, but what about a small local tax to help fund this project? Or some more very heavy fund raising efforts. How about a local tax on new subdivision homes? Nothing prohibitive and with a set term. We are lucky in Cedar Lake to pay very low property taxes even with the latest increases. We may pay a little more now, but improvement
- Marinas should charge incoming vehicles a fee to go toward the cost of dredging
- I am not a resident of Cedar Lake but we as a family enjoy the use of it, boating, skiing, tubing, etc. it is the only lake in the area close enough to go to with out making an escapade out of it. If there were any other way to clean up the lake than keeping out all the boaters I would definitely lean in that direction. thanks
- We all need to work together to put Cedar Lake back on the map as one of the best summer-family-fun resort areas in the U.S. Our wonderful life-time residents, current residents and future residents are all worth the efforts put forth in restoring our town.

- I have just moved here from Southern Indiana, live in the marsh on the south end of the lake, and am appalled at the lack of priority the city and county governments seem to give the lake ecosystem. From what I understand, the debate of whether to restore or not to restore is an old old one spanning a decade or more. This indicates to me a lack of truly serious consideration for the project. Yet working at the conference grounds I am struck by the number of people looking for a quiet, clean waterfront who have never heard of Cedar Lake, and ask me why it is such a well kept secret. I don't want to tell them it's because the lake is polluted and unhealthy. Historically this was not the case, so you need to ask yourselves why has commerce originating outside of Cedar Lake dropped to such a point that residents in the surrounding areas don't even know it is here? My suspicion is that they used to, but once the lake became too inhospitable, families stopped coming and over time have forgotten the lake is h
- Okay I think they should clean up the lake!! And minimize the use of any thing motor related to gases and oils. That way it would be more appealing. Also this lake is to small for all the traffic I see out there on the lake. More swimming for younger kids would be nice.
- The lake is desperate need of attention in order to increase the abundance of natural resources to the quality of many years ago. Special consideration to enhancing the fish population and preserving its use by migrating water fowl needs to be made. Above all, the rights and benefits of outdoor sportspersons should not be diminished. Example: the generations of waterfowlers and fishermen using and continually attempting to contribute to the lake's quality.